

# Salt River Fire Department Operating Guidelines

## Evacuation

April 2000

205.03

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## PROCEDURE

It may be necessary to evacuate an area of the Community from dangerous situations, which may include; hazardous material emergencies, potential explosions, floods, major fires or terrorism situations. An evacuation of anything more than a single structure requires a coordinated effort between Fire and Police commanders at the scene to ensure that evacuation is rapid and complete without unnecessary duplication of effort. It requires a definite plan and a method of reporting progress.

## IDENTIFICATION OF EVACUATION AREA

When evacuation of an area is indicated due to an imminent physical hazard (fire, explosion, toxic material, etc.) the limits of the evacuation area will normally be determined by Fire Department Command at the scene in consultation with the Police Supervisor at the scene. The practical considerations of what resources are available and what degree of risk is involved will be factors in the determination of evacuation limits.

In cases involving other influences, when time is available, the evacuation may be more deliberately planned.

## EXAMPLE:

Evacuation for a flood expected within six hours would be planned in an Emergency Operations Center and could involve other departments, Administration, Public Works, etc.

The Salt River Police Department will be responsible for securing the perimeter of the evacuation area, including traffic and pedestrian control.

The Salt River Fire Department will be responsible for assessment of the degree of danger and the need for evacuation and for the physical safety of personnel operating within the evacuation zone.

## ORGANIZATION OF EVACUATION

Once the desired area of evacuation and the perimeter have been established, a plan is necessary to actually effect the desired evacuation. This will be dependent on the resources available (Fire, Police, other agencies), and the type of situation. Personnel from one or several agencies may be involved in actually alerting citizens and assisting them to evacuate.

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1. Establish a unified Command Post for both Police and Fire. Utilize maps of the area to make assignments and report progress jointly to avoid duplication or omissions. If it is unfeasible to have the Police and Fire Command Posts together, liaison will have to be established to integrate the efforts.
2. Assign units or companies to evacuate specific objectives (a building, a block, a street, etc.) and report completion.
3. Assign Geographic Divisions to supervise operations.
4. Advise personnel if evacuees are to be directed to particular Evacuation Centers.
5. Use P.A. function on Electronic Sirens to alert citizens and door-to-door individual notification. Do not hesitate to make noise and attract attention if situation is urgent. P.A. capabilities on helicopters may also be used.
6. Start with areas in most immediate danger first. Assign priorities following degree of risk.
7. Assure the establishment and operation of reception centers in a timely manner.
8. People must not be prematurely allowed to re-enter.

## PUBLIC INFORMATION

Any major evacuation will require and benefit from complete Public Information notification. A Public Information Sector must be assigned to communicate with radio and television stations as quickly as possible to explain exactly what the situation is and what people involved should do.

Radio and television stations will make special announcements when requested by the Public Information Sector or by Alarm.

The Communications Center must also be informed of the situation to answer calls, which can be expected from people wanting to verify information. Alarm should also be instructed to notify hospitals which may be affected by the situation.

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## **EVACUATION CENTERS**

In most situations, it is desirable to have a location where evacuees can be directed. This should be a school, church or public facility where evacuees can gather and find temporary shelter in a safe location.

This center should be located and identified as quickly as possible.

When a long-term evacuation (more than 2-3 hours) is anticipated, contact and coordinate with the Red Cross to set-up a temporary shelter. This is usually best accomplished at a school. An E.M.T. should be assigned to each evacuation center with medical equipment and portable radios.

The Command Post must have direct communications with the Evacuation Center.

## **EMERGENCY OPERATING CENTER (E.O.C.)**

The President or Community Manager may order activation of the Emergency Operations Center in some situations involving large-scale evacuation. In this case, the Command Post at the scene reports information and may receive direction from the E.O.C.

## **BUILDING EVACUATION**

In fire fighting and other emergency operations, it is often necessary to evacuate a building or part of a building. This plan is intended to establish a system for evacuation.

1. Establish a Plan
2. Plan the evacuation and make assignments and progress reports related to the plan.
3. Evacuate persons in the greatest danger first. The people in the greatest danger in a fire are those in the immediate area and those above the fire.
4. Evacuation Companies should be assigned, according to priorities, to specific areas, sectors or floors to evacuate and report "All Clears."

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### 5. Identify Safe Evacuation Routes.

- An evacuation is intended to remove occupants from a hazard. The objective should include moving occupants to safe areas via identified safe paths. Companies may have to be assigned to keep the evacuation routes safe (with protective lines, ventilation, etc.).
- Use normal means of egress first (i.e., halls, stairs, elevators, etc.). Aerial ladders, ground ladders, fire escapes, etc., are secondary means of egress. If the evacuation route is unsafe, consider leaving occupants where they are until conditions improve.

### 6. Identify Evacuation Stairs

- In multi-story buildings, it may be necessary to designate one stairway to be used for evacuation while another is used for firefighting and/or ventilation.

### 7. Evacuate To A Safe Location

- Move evacuees to a location out of danger, but not further than is practical. In a high-rise building, two or three floors below the fire is usually adequate. Attempting to move evacuees too far tends to complicate the situation. The location chosen must be safe.

### 8. Mark Rooms Or Suites After Evacuation

- When evacuating a building with rooms or suites, mark doors to areas which have been searched and evacuated to avoid duplication of effort.

### 9. Use Alarm And Communication Systems

- These systems are designed to warn people of the need to evacuate. Use these in conjunction with evacuation teams when the need to evacuate is urgent. (If the situation is not urgent, face-to-face contact is less distressing than alarm bells.)

### 10. Avoid Panic

- Personnel must consciously work to lessen anxiety of occupants and avoid panic. Explain what the problem is and what needs to be done as accurately as the situation permits.

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### 11. Assign Sufficient Resources To Evacuation

- Rapid evacuation of a building may require a major commitment of companies. The commitment of companies must be sufficient to provide for non-ambulatory evacuees and those needing physical assistance. Never leave evacuated occupants unattended.

### 12. Use Elevators With Emergency Controls

- Elevators may be a valuable tool in evacuating a high-rise building if they have Emergency Control features and are operated by Fire Department personnel in communication with Command. Elevators should only be used when the safety of the hoistway is known.

### 13. Do Not Evacuate Unnecessarily

- If conditions do not present a hazard, evacuation may be unnecessary. Send personnel to evaluate conditions and judge the need for evacuation if the need is not obvious.

### 14. Prevent Re-entry

- Guard against re-entry attempts by citizens into the evacuation area. Coordinate with police/security personnel to protect the evacuation area.